

Cedar Hills enlists in renewable-energy program

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CEDAR HILLS — Cedar Hills has become the first Utah County community to join Rocky Mountain Power's Blue Sky program, which helps the company purchase more renewable energy resources.

Cedar Hills purchased enough renewable energy equal to the amount of power the city's buildings use, said Jeff Hymas, Rocky Mountain Power's spokesman.

Begun in 2000, the program purchases renewable energy, such as wind and geothermal, from donations made by Rocky Mountain Power customers. Individual customers, as well as cities, can choose whether to be a part of the program and how much they want to spend. The energy is purchased in blocks of 100 kilowatt-hours. Each block costs \$1.95.

"A typical residential customer in a Rocky Mountain Power service area uses about 790 kilowatt-hours of electricity each month," Hymas said.

Spending for the renewable blocks of energy allows Rocky Mountain Power to put more renewable energy resources on the regional electric system. Money received into the Blue Sky program, which always stays within the program, also goes toward encouraging additional development of renewable resources and to create community-based renewable energy projects. One of those community projects included the solar panels on the roof of the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City.

The company uses several forms of energy to produce electricity including coal, natural gas, hydroelectric power, wind energy and others.

Hymas said the company is trying to expand the types of renewable resources it uses, as well as the current sources, such as wind. The company recently proposed two new wind farms in Wyoming and hopes to have them finished by 2008.

Currently the company buys wind from farms in Wyoming, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

Cedar Hills wanted to make a statement by committing to the Blue Sky program.

"First of all, it sends a message to not only our residents, but to other residents around, that the city's interested in renewable energy, and (we should) be smart about the way we use our resources," said Konrad Hildebrandt, Cedar Hills city manager.

The bedroom community, which also has a recycling program and is working on a green waste program, hopes to be an example for change.

"Our current (city) council feels strongly that if they can set an example of conservation, that's what they want to do," he said.

Ogden, Park City, Moab, Salt Lake City and several other cities are also involved with the Blue Sky program.

More information about the Blue Sky program can be found at www.rockymountainpower.net/bluesky.

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